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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by New Humanity, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status, Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, Association Points-Coeur, International Volunteer Organization for Women Education Development, Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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International Solidarity and Migration

In conjunction with the 38th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity, Mr Obiora C. Okafor, will deliver his vision-setting report, laying out topics he intends or hopes to engage with during his mandate. One of the topics that he highlights is migration and international solidarity. Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) and the co-signing NGOs agree with the Independent Expert in affirming that the two topics are strictly connected.

Because of political unrest, poverty, climate-related disasters, and war, we are currently facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War with 244 million migrants, more than 22 million refugees and 40 million internally displaced persons.

The suffering of migrants and refugees is extreme. On top of the trauma they may have suffered at home, thousands have died in transit, trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea or the Sahel or traversing Central America. Many migrants and asylum seekers are often easy prey of human traffickers and other criminals and they suffer serious human rights violations and abuses.

Yet, the world is undergoing a crisis of solidarity with the tendency to build walls instead of bridges. Political prejudice and intolerance against refugees and migrants are pervasive in all regions. Thus human needs end up overshadowed while xenophobia speaks louder than reason. We have reached the extent that in some countries the acting in solidarity towards migrants across borders is qualified as "crime" against the national security.

We are in the third year of implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda that promises to "leave no one behind". Yet, the attitude and policies of many States towards migrants and refugees seem to ignore the spirit of the Agenda by putting the concern for national security first and violate very often the human rights of migrants and refugees.

On 19 September 2016, Heads of State and Government at the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the New York Declaration1 whereby: expressed profound solidarity with those who are forced to flee; reaffirmed their obligations to fully respect the human rights of refugees and migrants; agreed that protecting refugees and supporting the countries that shelter them are shared international responsibilities and must be borne more equitably and predictably; pledged robust support to those countries affected by large movements of refugees and migrants; agreed upon the core elements of a Comprehensive Refugee response Framework; and agreed to work towards the adoption of a global compact on Refugees and a Global compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The New York Declaration recognises the unprecedented level of human mobility and the complexity of the growing global phenomenon of large movements of refugees and migrants. It also recognises clearly the positive contribution made by migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development in accordance with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda adopted one year earlier. It reaffirms the human rights of all refugees and migrants and commits to protecting the safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status, at all times.

Moreover, States agreed to ensure a people-centred, sensitive, humane, dignified, gender-responsive and prompt reception for all persons arriving in their countries, and particularly those in large movements, whether refugees or migrants.
Both the spirit and the letter of the New York Declaration called for a focus on large movement of refugees and migrants, including mixed flows; a right-based approach for both refugees and migrants; a complementarity between both the Global Compacts processes in order to guarantee a continuum of protection and ensure that no one is left

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behind; a commitment to also protect irregular migrants, with a special focus on, though not limited to, the most vulnerable ones; and a recognition that refugee movements, in particular the large ones, are triggered by many factors, which go beyond the ones related to the narrow 1951 refugee definition.

We are now approaching the fourth round of negotiations for the two Global Compacts. Already, gaps are appearing in the successive drafts of both compacts with the fundamental principles affirmed in the New York declaration at risk to be forgotten.

We urge the Member States that soon will be requested to recommit themselves to their legal and moral obligations, to renew and be driven by the spirit of profound solidarity pledged in the New York declaration (paragraph 8).

In the spirit of solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are migrants, Pope Francis, in the 2018 message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, prophetically launched a road map to deal with present-day migration related challenges by putting into action four crucial words: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees.

We need to reinforce positive narrative on migration. Moreover, we need to cease identification of migrants as a threat but rather to see them as contributors to the growth and development of host countries, countries of transit as well as their countries of origin. There is an essential need to recognize our common humanity.

The Deputy Secretary-General, Ms Amina J. Mohammed, remarked at the Fourth Annual Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs - Perspectives on Migration: displacement and marginalization, inclusion and justice -: "Human beings have moved from place to place since the beginning of time, by choice and under duress, and will continue to do so. Refugees and migrants are not "others". They are "we". They are as diverse as the human family itself. Only by upholding our duty to protect those fleeing persecution and violence and by embracing the opportunities that refugees and migrants offer, will we be able to achieve a more prosperous, secure and equitable future for all."

To what Ms Mohammed said, we would like to add that only by welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees and by consolidating a human rights-based international solidarity, we might achieve such a future.

In this regard, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) and the co-signing NGOs strongly believe that the challenges ahead of us such as the unprecedented migration flux, the climate change that creates so many victims of natural disasters, the increased inequities between and within countries, among others, require the recognition by the United Nations of the right to international solidarity as a further step for ensuring the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights. Therefore, there is need to speed up the process for adoption of the draft declaration on the right to international solidarity.

The draft declaration on the right to international solidarity is significantly relevant at a time of rising nationalism and fragmentation around the world and a human rights-based vision of international solidarity could create an alternative narrative to that of the actual globalisation by countering its negative effects and promoting the global sustainable development for all and at all levels.